

Theme 1 : Promotion of Tourism / Regional Report

Name of theme	Promotion of Tourism	Name of local or regional government	Tagajo City
Name of undertaking	Developing human resources with cultural and artistic creativity		
Outline	Globalization is an essential viewpoint when considering urban planning for the future, but confrontation and disparity, as well as the standardization of uniform cultures, remain as issues. We are therefore cultivating diversity through heightened sensitivity and sensibility which we believe arises from cultural and artistic creation. Through the above to cultivate diversity, we are also developing human resources which can support the global society. Our aim is that these people will be social resources for creating new value.		
Amount of budget	7,600,000 yen (local currency)	70,000 US dollars	

1. Tasks (current situation)

- The public transportation network in Tagajo City has been well developed, and the city has continued to grow as a highly convenient, easy-going place to live. The city also boasts the highest population density in the Tohoku region (the northeast area in Japan). Historically, the city was made the capital of Mutsu Province in the Nara period, and more recently the city has seen development as a so-called satellite town for Sendai City, but with little standing of its own.

One third of the area was then submerged by the huge tsunami that directly hit Tagajo City due to the Great East Japan Earthquake, and the city incurred enormous damage. Moving toward recovery, the city vowed to build an even better society than the one that existed prior to the disaster, and has provided support to disaster victims to help rebuild their lives, and built highly disaster-resistant infrastructures. Furthermore, as the creative center of recovery efforts, the city center is being redeveloped as Tohoku's foremost hub for cultural exchange. A library and a large-scale book store were constructed to make the city a center for knowledge with 450,000 books, which aims to generate various encounters and exchanges between people of all ages, genders, and nationalities, through interaction with culture and art. In addition to this, we hope this will lead to the development of personnel who can become social resources and create new value, while anticipating the future of creative recovery efforts.

The future of our urban planning must of course consider population issues, but we also believe that developing human resources with having a global perspective is needed in the population decreasing regional societies. However, issues remain with globalization—such as confrontation and disparity, and the standardization of uniform cultures—and developing human resources who can support regional societies based on harmonious and diverse globalization is a pressing issue.

2. Goals (future image)

- To cultivate diversity through heightened sensitivity and sensibility arising from cultural and artistic creation, and develop human resources who can support regional societies based on harmonious and diverse globalization.

3. Details of undertaking (overview)

- Project to promote the creation and exchange of urban culture
Aiming to be Tohoku's foremost hub for cultural exchange—linking the new municipal library, the Tagajo City Cultural Center music hall, the Tohoku History Museum, and the remains of Tagajo Castle—we are promoting activities to create new culture and art that will be the driving force behind our regional development. We hope this will lead to heightened sensitivity and sensibility, creation of various encounters and exchanges between individuals, and development of human resources who can accept one another's differing values. As well as cultivating diversity and developing human resources who can support regional societies based on harmonious and diverse globalization, through these diverse cultures we hope to develop a mindset that places great importance on value and a pluralistic approach. By then promoting creative mutual relationships between cultures, we can enrich the lifestyles of Tagajo citizens and reinvigorate the regional economy.

(Things that are going well)

- Through our efforts to create new culture and art, we have been able to create an attractive individuality and are continuing to promote encounters and exchange. Thanks to continuing our efforts such as developing human resources through culture and arts, they are gradually starting to spread to the citizens. Therefore, if we keep continue with these efforts, we can expect further results.

(Things that are not going well)

- Initiatives have only just begun, and we must take time to implement policies in stages. We are currently increasing opportunities for citizens to familiarize themselves with culture and art, but long-term efforts will be necessary to develop human resources who can support regional societies based on harmonious and diverse globalization. Work to create a roadmap that will lead us to this goal has not yet begun.

Theme 1 : Promotion of Tourism / Regional Report

Name of theme	Promotion of Tourism	Name of local or regional government	Arakawa City
Name of undertaking	Improving systems to accommodate foreign tourists		
Outline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As international events such as the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games approach, Japan is facing a pressing need to improve its systems to take in inbound tourists. The government has announced its goal to increase the number of foreign tourists to 40 million by the year 2020 as part of its Tourism Nation Promotion Basic Plan, and it is comprehensively formulating and implementing various policies with the goal of becoming a tourism-oriented nation. As such, in order to improve hospitality for foreign tourists in Arakawa City, we are in the process of enhancing our tourism information centers and implementing various projects that make use of our regional characteristics. 		
Amount of budget	(Local currency)	(Amount converted to US\$)	

1. Tasks (current situation)

1) Increase and diversification of foreign tourists

The number of foreign visitors to Japan is steadily increasing: in 2018, the number was estimated to be 31.19 million (an 8.7% year-on-year increase). By ratio, 73.4% of those were from East Asian countries and regions such as China, Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong; 11.2% from Southeast Asian countries such as Thailand, Singapore, and Malaysia; and 11.6% from Europe, the US, Australia, and other countries. In 2018, there were more than 100,000 visitors from 19 different countries.

Looking ahead, highly popular international sporting events such as the 2019 Rugby World Cup and the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games are expected to contribute to an even further increase in number of foreign tourists.

2) Necessity of efficient systems to accommodate tourists

To ensure that foreign tourists—who are expected to continue to increase and diversify—enjoy their time in Japan, it will be necessary to ease their concerns relating to the language barrier. As such, improvements are particularly required in multi-language tourist information signs and multi-language support at information centers.

Moreover, ways in which foreign tourists spend their time in Japan are changing, and they are now leaning more toward the consumption of services over products. The trend is now shifting to experiential tourism, and thus it will be necessary to develop programs that make maximum use of our regional characteristics.

3) Issues in improving systems to accommodate tourists

Although tourist information signs are gradually being made available in multiple languages, hotels, restaurants, and other hospitality services have not made a similar change, and the difference is clear to see.

As foreign tourists continue to diversify, so do the languages that need to be catered to. There are also considerations that need to be made regarding religions, such as making Halal food available to Muslim tourists.

It is thus imperative to enhance experiential programs so that all foreign visitors can participate.

2. Goals (future image)

Improve systems to accommodate foreign tourists so that they can enjoy a stress-free trip to Japan. Specifically, enhance multi-language support, improve free Wi-Fi areas, promote hands-free travel, and more.

3. Details of undertaking

(Overview)

- 1) Establishment of a tourist information center that can cater to multiple languages
As tourists are expected to increase with the approaching Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, we have established the Nippori Tourist Information Center to spread the appeals of Arakawa, and to ensure that visitors can tour the area successfully. As we expect the center to be used by foreign tourists too, we have stationed English- and Chinese-speaking staff at the facility.
- 2) Improvement of systems to accommodate tourists
We are in the process of creating English, Chinese, and Korean tourism maps. We are also moving forward with developments for a tourism app and free Wi-Fi spots to enable more efficient access to tourism information and better navigability of the area.
- 3) Events for foreign tourists
So that foreign visitors can experience Japanese culture, we are holding traditional Japanese dance workshops and shopping arcade tours with free food samples, while we have also partnered with regional Obon festival dance events where visitors can try on *yukata* and take part in the dances.

(Things that are going well)

By stationing staff that cater to multiple languages at our new tourist information center, we are now able to communicate a wide range of tourism information to both domestic and overseas visitors.

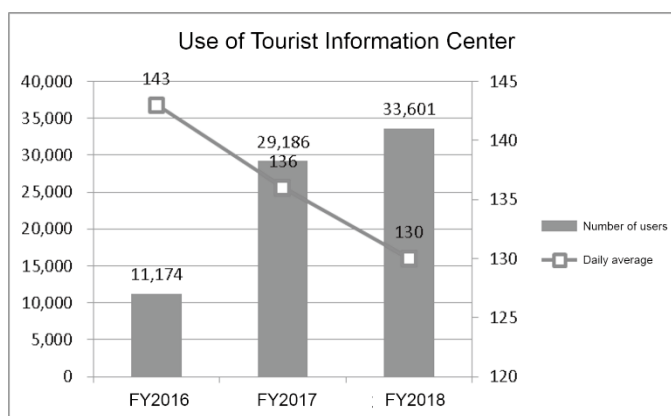
We are also enhancing systems to accommodate foreign visitors through our multi-language maps, tourism app, and free Wi-Fi spots where visitors can find tourism-related information.

(Things that are not going well)

Hotels and restaurants are not receiving the necessary help in creating multi-language websites, pamphlets, and menus, and thus we must continue to promote the necessity of such material to business owners.

We must continue to develop and consider areas where visitors can take part in experiential-based tourism.

4. References



<Supplementary information>

The Tourism Information Center is being operated as follows.

• Regarding FY2016

As the center opened in October, figures for FY2016 are for six months.

• Increasing business hours

FY2016: Fri, Sat, Sun, and national holidays

FY2017: Thu, Fri, Sat, Sun, and national holidays

FY2018: Mon, Thu, Fri, Sat, Sun, and national holidays

Theme 1 : Promotion of Tourism / Regional Report

Name of theme	Promotion of Tourism	Name of local or regional government	Takayama City
Name of undertaking	Takayama City overseas strategy		
Outline	<p>In progressing the three pillars of our overseas strategy—attracting guests, promoting sales, and encouraging exchange—we are working to further enhance our value as a city. As such, we are developing various measures as part of our overseas strategy, and training personnel who can contribute to its success.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attracting guests from overseas • Promoting sales overseas • Encouraging overseas exchange 		
Amount of budget	92,000,000 yen (Local currency)	US\$ 840,000 (Amount converted to US\$)	

1. Tasks (current situation)

- To respond to socioeconomic changes overseas, we must work to attract tourists from various countries and regions.
- In line with the diversifying needs of overseas tourists, we must also enhance our ability to accommodate them.
- We must make progress with our overseas advertising activities to promote sales of local products.
- By revitalizing interaction with other cities in a range of fields, we must further our understanding of other cultures, and we must also promote overseas exchange to train personnel with wide-ranging perspectives.
- In addition to reaffirming the importance of peace—the key to our city's development—we must take notice of famine and poverty overseas, and contribute to everlasting peace worldwide.

2. Goals (future image)

- Create a city bustling with overseas tourists by effectively communicating the appeals of Hida-Takayama.
- Ensure active sales of local products overseas through the Hida-Takayama brand.
- In tandem with our sister and friendship cities, effectively make use of mutual characteristics to further exchange in various fields.
- Ensure lively overseas exchange in various fields.
- Communicate relevant information to realize everlasting peace both in Japan and overseas.

3. Details of undertaking (Overview)

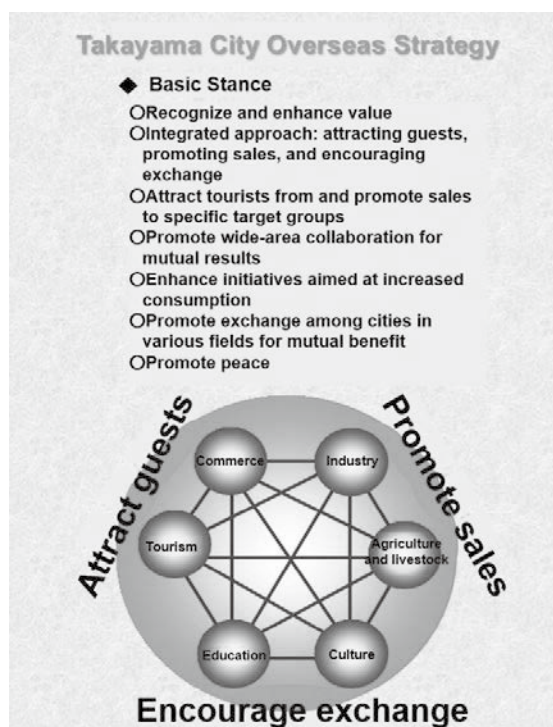
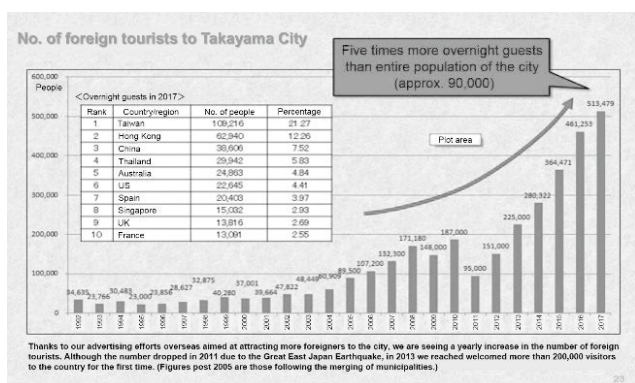
- Attracting guests from overseas
 - We are enhancing our foreign language pamphlets and websites and making use of Facebook and other social media outlets to effectively communicate information.
 - We are undertaking sales activities via individuals from top-level management, exhibiting at overseas travel fairs, communicating information overseas through media outlets and travel-related businesses, promoting the city to both domestic and overseas national governments as well as corporations, and promoting advertising activities and efforts to attract overseas guests in tandem with the Japan National Tourism Organization and Gifu Prefecture.
 - We are working to attract international events, meetings, and educational trips to the city, and creating and utilizing travel programs that tour the nature, food culture, and traditional culture of our regions to attract more overseas guests.
 - We are enhancing our ability to accommodate overseas guests. Specifically, we are providing wireless LAN spots, creating multi-language guide signs, training and securing guide interpreters, and improving services that consider the cultural and religious characteristics of those who visit the city.
 - We are collaborating over a wide area—including the Shoryudo travel route and the Hokuriku, Hida, and Shinshu Mitsuboshi Kaido routes—to create appealing tourist spots and travel routes.

- Promoting sales overseas
 - We are providing sales support to businesses by surveying and analyzing overseas markets and discovering local products with overseas potential.
 - We are hosting training seminars regarding overseas expansion and providing opportunities for negotiations with import businesses. In this way, we are developing business people interested in expanding overseas.
 - We are undertaking sales activities via individuals from top-level management, exhibiting at overseas trade fairs, communicating information overseas through media outlets and import businesses, promoting the city to both domestic and overseas national governments as well as corporations, and promoting advertising and sales activities in tandem with the Japan External Trade Organization and the prefecture.
 - We are enhancing purchasing environments for foreigners by setting up easy-to-understand purchase methods and product explanations, making menus available in foreign languages, and introducing credit card payment systems.
- Encouraging overseas exchange
 - We are promoting further exchange with and among our overseas sister and friendship cities in a range of fields, including education, culture, art, and industry.
 - We are training and enhancing the skills of internationally minded personnel through overseas secondments, English speech contests, and foreign language classes.
 - We are encouraging exchange between citizens and visiting/resident foreigners, inviting Coordinators for International Relations to the city, and offering our support to private exchange organizations to increase opportunities for people to interact with different cultures.
 - We are strengthening our relationships with all domestic governmental organizations to promote exchange among cities and regions throughout the world.
 - To contribute to international society, we are communicating information inside and outside Japan to heighten understanding of international issues such as conflict, famine, and environmental problems, and to realize everlasting peace.

(Things that are going well)

- An increasing number of foreigners are visiting Takayama City.
- We are carrying out advertising activities as part of a private-public collaboration.
- We are carrying out advertising activities through wide-area collaboration.
- We are undertaking cooperative exchange activities with overseas cities in a range of genres.

4. References



Theme 1 : Promotion of Tourism / Regional Report

Name of theme	Promotion of Tourism	Name of local or regional government	Kashihara City
Name of undertaking	Development of new image of Nara and promotion of tourism as broader region		
Outline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transition from a day-trip destination just to see the Great Buddha and deer, to the overnight-trip destination. It's about time to progress from the image of "Great Buddha and deer". Nara Prefecture has abundance of attractive tourist destinations, however they are spread across a number of local governments. Promotional efforts in broader regional scale are necessary. 		
Amount of budget	197,654,000 JPY (Total tourism budget in FY2019)	1,865,716 USD (Amount converted to US\$)	

1. Tasks (current situation)

- * Purpose of tourism promotion is induction of positive economic effect to the region. Overnight tourists are important to achieve this!
- * Most tourists stay in Osaka or Kyoto, and make day-trip to Nara Park just to see the Great Buddha and deer. Therefore, Nara Prefecture has the lowest number of overnight tourists in the nation.
- * Great Buddha and deer are already well-known to the world. Publicity of middle to south area of Nara Prefecture is necessary to attract overnight tourists into Nara City and Nara Prefecture.
- * Nara Park is awash with foreign tourists. However, most of them only visit Nara Park, not middle to south area of Nara Prefecture.
- * Major tourist attractions in Kyoto, such as Kiyomizu-dera Temple, Arashiyama, Fushimi Inari and Kibune are all under Kyoto City government. On the other hand, those in Nara Prefecture are spread across different local governments, e.g. Hase-dera Temple in Sakurai City, Horyu-ji Temple in Ikaruga Town, Mount Yoshino in Yoshino Town, and the Great Buddha and deer in Nara City. Administrative boundary is technically irrelevant to tourism though...
- * Tourism destinations in middle to south area of Nara Prefecture are well known however managed under relatively small-scale local governments, that are not financially fit enough to execute large-scale promotions such as international sales.

2. Goals (future image)

- * Increasing overnight tourists
 - > Revitalization of tourism in middle to south area of Nara Prefecture is expected to increase variety in tourism options, purposes and excursions in Nara Prefecture, leading to increased overnight tourists in both Nara City and middle to south area of Nara Prefecture.
- * Tourism promotions in broader regional scale.
 - Image of Nara Prefecture is only focused on the north side, namely the Great Buddha and deer in Nara City, therefore the new image of Nara needs to be introduced.
 - Tourist destinations in middle to south area of Nara Prefecture (especially middle area) lack unified image.
 - > Implement integrated tourism measures through creation of new local brand by enhancing the tourism zones in the middle area of Nara Prefecture.
- * Measures to attract foreign tourists (visiting Nara Park) to south
 - > The north-south route of "Yamanobe-no-Michi - Omiwa Shrine - Asuka - Mount Yoshino" is in the areas adjacent to Nara Park and has abundance of world-heritage-class tourist destinations. Additionally, these tourist spots are conveniently located for foreign tourists as they are easily accessible by JR trains.

3. Details of undertaking (Overview)

- * Development of broader regional travel brochures and guide maps
 - = Administrative boundaries are irrelevant to tourist's itineraries. Brochures and maps with limited scope of individual local government are useless. Regional brochures and maps covering not only Kashihara City but also surrounding areas have been actively developed.
- * Transition from events to promotions
 - = Transition from measures of holding events to attract tourists, to measures focusing on PR and promotions

mainly aiming to increase visitors from other cities and prefectures (especially the Tokyo metropolitan area) with a view that attractive tourist destinations already exist. Those measures include publication of feature articles targeting middle-aged and senior adults, utilization of unique SNS activities and hosting of lectures in Tokyo. The City endeavors to perform such promotional measures in collaboration with middle to south areas of Nara Prefecture.

- = Local vehicle license plate “Asuka” is decided to be issued within 5 local governments in Asukagawa River basin, from the next financial year. “Asuka” license plates are expected to serve as moving advertisements.
- * Measure to increase overnight tourists
- = Complex facility comprising of hotel and government office branch, etc. was built right near Yamato-yagi Station, the traffic hub of the Prefecture, under Private Finance Initiative. Number of new hotels are also under construction in middle to south area of Nara Prefecture.

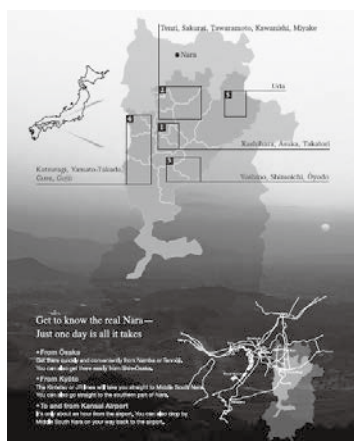
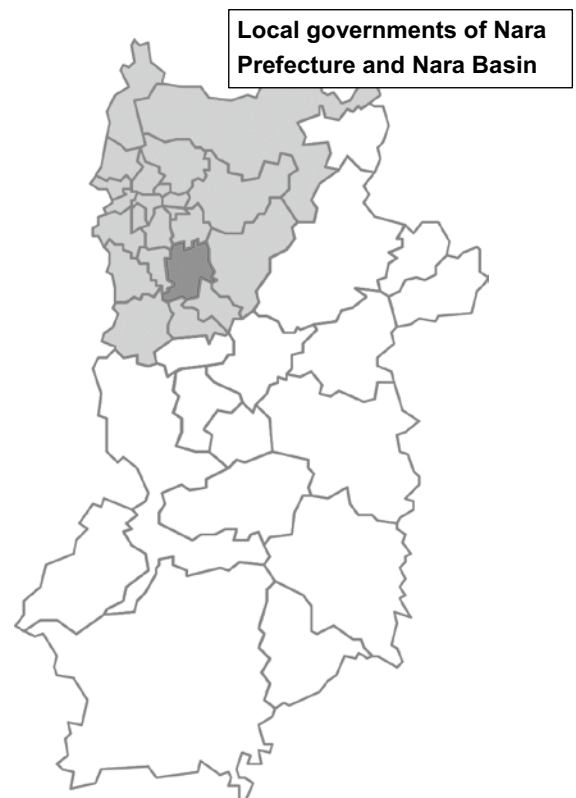
(Things that are going well)

- * Overnight tourists increased = From 122,000 (2011) to 186,000 (2018)
- * Tourists increased = From 3,700,000 (2011) to 4,900,000 (2018)

(Things that are not going well)

- * Brand image of the middle area of Nara Prefecture has not been established. Tourism efforts as broader region are not progressing.
- * Few foreign tourists (visiting Nara Park) travel further to middle to south area of Nara Prefecture. No attracting efforts have been effective.

4. References



Theme 1 : Promotion of Tourism / Regional Report

Name of theme	Promotion of Tourism	Name of local or regional government	Katsuragi City
Name of undertaking	Measures for inbound tourism centered on sumo-based tourism promotion		
Outline	Kasuragi City is the birthplace of Taima-no-Kehaya, an individual who took part in the first sumo wrestling match in Japan. We also have a sumo wrestling museum, Kehaya-za, which is one of only few in Japan. The museum has a full-size sumo wrestling ring onto which both men and women are welcome to step into. We are using this ring to hold exhibition matches, traditional singing performances by sumo wrestlers, and other events to promote Kasuragi tourism both inside and outside of Japan. In fiscal 2018, we welcomed around 1,500 visitors to the museum.		
Amount of budget	(Local currency) 14,000,000 yen	(Amount converted to US\$) 131,384 US\$	

1. Tasks (current situation)

- Increasing number of inbound tourists
 - Although the number of visitors to the museum is increasing, there aren't many places in the city for visitors to stay at, and we aren't seeing a ripple effect into the city or Taima-dera Temple.
 - The majority of visitors to the museum come in groups via a tour company, and there aren't many individual visitors.

2. Goals (future image)

- Ensure that inbound tourists visit areas within the city
 - We are working to improve city infrastructure in such ways as attracting hotels to the area. We are also training "international exchange" volunteers to encourage more foreign visitors to travel within the city.

3. Details of undertaking (Overview)

3-1 Project to develop and promote sumo-based tourism as the birthplace of the sport through wide-area collaboration

- We are creating sumo promotion videos for foreigners
 - In 2018 we created three different DVDs: Tourism, The History of Sumo, and The Greatest Sumo Bouts.
 - The Tourism DVD is being played on a screen within the sumo museum, and The History of Sumo and The Greatest Sumo Bouts are played when groups visit the museum and at various other events. We are also looking at other ways to utilize the videos.
- We are jointly hosting sumo-based tourism events
 - In tandem with the Sumo Tourism Council of Sakurai City and Kashiba City, both of which also claim to be the birthplace of sumo, we are hosting sumo-tourism events.

3-2 Training "international exchange" volunteers

- In our promotion of international exchange, we are receiving enthusiastic help from citizens in the city to further mutual understanding and friendship with foreign visitors. We are predominantly training volunteers in foreign languages so they can offer their support to foreigners.
 - We are training guide interpreters and translators of foreign languages.
 - Making use of flower arrangement, the tea ceremony, calligraphy, martial arts, and other aspects unique to our city, we are training volunteers to introduce and teach foreign visitors about Japanese culture.

3-3 Project for international exchange centered on Coordinators for International Relations

- Predominantly using Coordinators for International Relations, we are moving forward with exchange projects together with the local governments of our sister cities.
 - A Coordinator for International Relations arrived in Kasuragi City in July 2019.
 - We will promote Kasuragi City tourism both inside and outside the country through social media and other means.
 - We will begin with exchange events for children in our efforts to collaborate with the local governments of our sister cities.

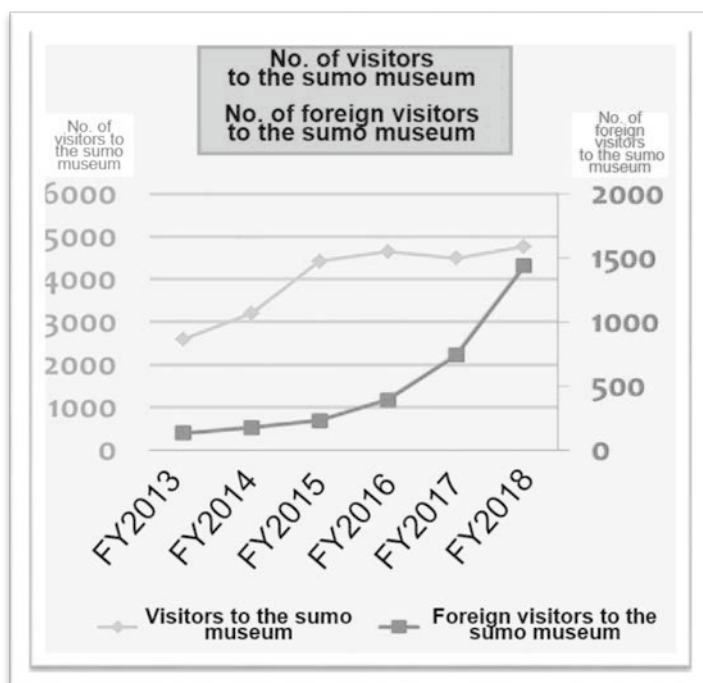
(Things that are going well)

- We are seeing an increasing number of foreigners visit the sumo museum.
- Wrestlers performing in the exhibition matches are being paid.
- We are promoting the city through social media and other means.

(Things that are not going well)

- We are not seeing a ripple effect from the sumo museum into other tourism facilities and restaurants in the city.
- Some tour programs enable foreign tourists in group tours to enter the wrestling ring with amateur sumo wrestlers and wrestle. However, during this time, other regular visitors cannot enter the first floor where the wrestling ring is. We are currently looking at ways to remedy the problem.
- Museum staff's ability to accommodate foreign tourists is lacking.
- We don't have enough guest rooms to accommodate all our visitors (including those at private lodgings).

4. References



Theme 1 : Promotion of Tourism / Regional Report

Name of theme	Promotion of Tourism	Name of local or regional government	Ikaruga Town
Name of undertaking	Creating a tourism town in line with the 1400 th anniversary of Prince Shotoku's death		
Outline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although around 980,000 tourists visit Ikaruga Town each year (FY2018), the majority just stop off for a short visit to Horyu-ji Temple. We are therefore promoting initiatives to switch from a town that tourists simply pass through to one where they take a stroll, tour, and stay for other activities. In order to encourage tourists to enjoy the town for longer, in more diverse ways, and more thoroughly, we are promoting efforts to attract accommodation facilities to the area to achieve and enhance nighttime tourism, an element that was previously completely lacking from our offerings. We are expecting an increase in visitors from both inside and outside the country in line with major events such as the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics and the 1400th anniversary of Prince Shotoku's death in 2021. The 1400th anniversary of Prince Shotoku's death in 2021 and the new Reiwa era are the perfect opportunity for us to widely communicate our "Ikaruga Town—The Home of Prince Shotoku" slogan. We will install lanterns on the approach to Horyu-ji Temple, and in line with the his <i>wa</i> ideals, we are promoting the "Lanterns of <i>Wa</i>" project. We are marketing <i>tatsuta-age</i> (deep-fried chicken) as the town's local dish. Coincidentally, <i>tatsuta-age</i> are named after the Tatsuta River mentioned in the <i>Manyoshu</i> book of poems, from which the name "Reiwa" was adopted. 		
Amount of budget	Approx. 109,000,000 yen (FY2019) (Local currency)	Approx. US\$ 1,020,000 (FY2019) (Amount converted to US\$)	

1. Tasks (current situation)

- Approximately 980,000 tourists visit Ikaruga Town each year (FY2018). However, the majority of these visitors just stop off at the World Heritage Site Horyu-ji Temple, stay for a short time, and then move onto their next destination.
- As such, consumption by tourists in the town is low, and we are not seeing any positive economic effects from our food industry, experience-based tourism, and hotels.
- The deterioration of ancient buildings in the area is leading to an increase in abandoned houses, reconstructions, and demolitions. This deterioration in tandem with new developments in the area has led to discord in the town's streetscape.
- Ikaruga Town lacks its own local specialty, which means we must work to develop and enhance our food industry, a key tourism product.

2. Goals (future image)

- Switch from a town that tourists simply pass through to see Horyu-ji Temple to one where they stay the night, take a stroll, tour, and stay for other activities, in turn bringing vitality to regions, and creating a virtuous economic cycle.

3. Details of undertaking

(Overview)

- Attracting accommodation facilities to the area
 - Ikaruga Town was the first in Nara Prefecture to be recognized as part of the government-led Historic Scenery Maintenance and Improvement Project in February 2014. In October of the same year, the area around Horyu-ji Temple was designated a special use district to mitigate construction in the area. Making use of the area's historical townscape, we are promoting it as a key area for strolls in the town, with new restaurants, workshops, hotels, and more.

FY2014: Japanese Café Fukokuen



FY2015: Ikarucoki, a facility for those seeking to open their own business



FY2019: Waqoo Horyuji Hotel



FY2020: Horyuji Park Hotel



2) Developing local specialties (Tatsuta-age Project and Ikaruga Brand 2019 accreditation)

- With a name inspired by the Tatsuda River in Ikaruga Town, famous for its autumn leaves, we are actively marketing *tatsuta-age* fried chicken as a local specialty.
- We are accrediting products that use regional resources under the Ikaruga Brand, and communicating their appeals both inside and outside of town.

Map of *tatsuta-age* sales locations



Tatsuta-age fried chicken



Ikaruga Brand 2019



(Things that are going well)

Following the November 2014 opening of the Fukokuen café in the former residence of Kitabatake Harufusa, other shops are continuing to open in the area.

(Things that are not going well)

Ikaruga Town is not seen as an area with attractive nighttime tourism, and thus we must investigate ways to sustain the regional economy even after hotels open in the area.

4. References

FY2019: Guest House, *Ikaruga-biyori*



I'm Umayado-san, the advertising mascot for the 1400th anniversary of Prince Shotoku's death!



Theme 1 : Promotion of Tourism / Regional Report

Name of theme	Promotion of Tourism	Name of local or regional government	Asuka Village
Name of undertaking	Promotion of stay-type tourism — building of Asuka Marugoto Museum, a roofless field museum —		
Outline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Because of the Asuka Law focusing only on the village, wealthy historical and cultural resources as the birthplace of Japan and peaceful rural scenery are exceptionally preserved with abundant tourist attractions. ○ Due to building restrictions, we are short of enough facilities providing tourism services, and tourism consumption is small. In addition, the population is decreasing due to the lack of working places. ○ We aim at regional revitalization by expanding consumption and employment. To that end, we promote the building of the Asuka Marugoto Museum felt by the five senses through the enrichment of dining, experiencing, shopping, and lodging, contrary to the conventional tourism only focusing on seeing of sights. 		
Amount of budget	81,640,000 yen	US\$ 765,783.20	

1. Tasks (current situation)

- The population has decreased since 1990 when it peaked at about 7,300, and now it is about 5,500.
- The majority of tourists go and return in one day, and their tourism consumption is small. The number of tourists had been decreasing since 1982 when it peaked at about 1,750 thousand, but it has been hovering around 800 thousand per year for the past twenty years.
- The number of hotel guests in the village continued to decrease as that of tourists, but the number of hotel stays has recovered from the bottom of 10 thousand to 20 thousand per year due to the promotion of stay-type tourism.

2. Goals (future image)

- Aiming at 50 thousand hotel guests per year by promoting stay-type tourism utilizing regional resources.
- Increase of tourism consumption by enriching tourism contents such as lodging, eating and drinking, and sales.
- Revitalization of the region through increase of employment in the region and agricultural production, and so forth by expanding the tourism industry.

3. Details of undertaking

(Overview)

- Opening of Roadside Station Asuka as the base for sightseeing tours
In September 2018, as a doorway for sightseeing, we built and opened a roadside station along a national highway in front of Kintetsu Asuka Station. It contains a comprehensive tourist information counter providing sightseeing information and a direct sales store where visitors can purchase agricultural products and processed goods in the village. It works as a base for sightseeing tours and a place to introduce the appeal of the region.
- Enhancing the function to send out information through brochures and websites
In order to introduce the appeal of stay-type tourism and encourage visitors to make tours, we are trying to provide information that suits visitors' needs, in utilizing social networking services, renewing websites, and making new brochures. For foreign visitors, we are installing multilingual visitor information signs, improving the Wi-Fi environment, and sending out information on multilingual tourist brochures and websites.
- Creating travel products and experience-based programs
In response to diversifying tourist needs, and to enrich stay-type tourism contents utilizing the regionality, we are creating new travel products and experience-based programs. We aim to create composite, high-value-added, and attractive products. For that, the tourist association has taken the initiative in combining parties in all fields including cultural assets, shrines and temples, agriculture and forestry, and commerce and industry in the village.

4. Promoting educational travel

From 2011, we have promoted hosting of experience-based educational travels. The steering body is Yamato-Asuka New Tourism which became a general incorporated association last year. It provides homestay-type and experience-based programs for farming, cooking, and other experiences in private houses mainly for domestic and foreign students. Initially, there were only less than 1,000 stays per year, but in 2018 they attained more than 5,600 stays. About a half of guests are mainly foreign visitors from Taiwan and other Asian countries.

5. Measures for enhancing the appeal of sightseeing spots through wide-area cooperation and partnership with companies

We are cooperating with Nara Prefecture and the concerned cities for the world heritage registration of Asuka-Fujiwara: Archaeological sites of Japan's Ancient Capitals and Related Properties which were put on the tentative list in 2007. In addition, we are engaged in activities to enhance the appeal as a sightseeing spot including the invitation of new accommodation Hoshino Resorts in cooperation with private companies.

6. Tourism fact-finding surveys

We are conducting tourism surveys for creation of attractive contents and improvement of environment to raise satisfaction of visitors, extend their sojourn time, and boost tourism consumption.

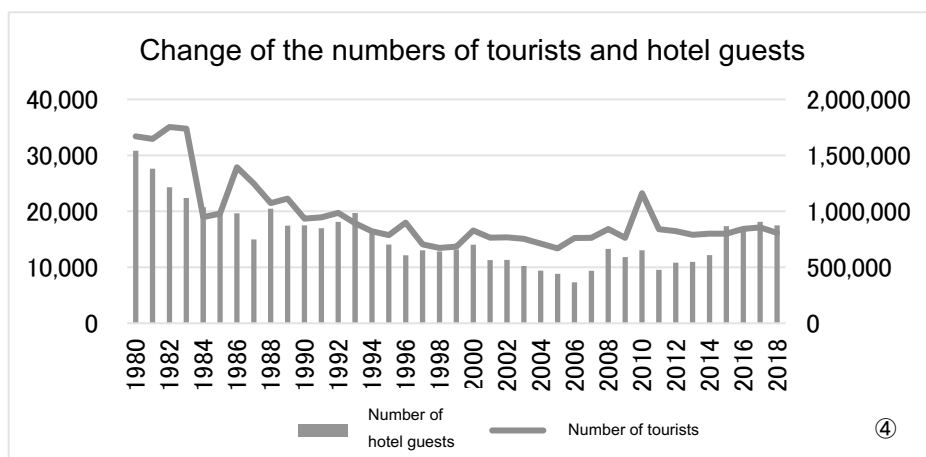
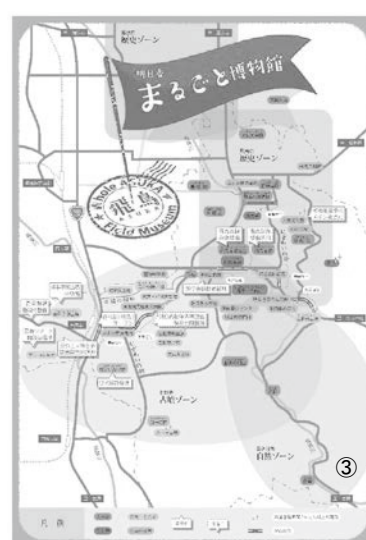
(Things that are going well)

- Tourism advertisement and product development are conducted not by the government alone, but in cooperation with the tourist association, private companies, and the municipalities concerned. The frame of cooperation is being put into place to strengthen the capacity to send out information and to enrich the contents offered by travel agencies at the destination.
- Homestay-type and experience-based programs (private house stay) contribute to regional vitalization by enabling participants to live with residents while bodily feeling the Asuka Marugoto Museum through historical, cultural, farming, and dining experience.

(Things that are not going well)

- There has not been apparent increase in employment, tourism consumption, or agricultural production in the region. In the future, we will need to repeatedly conduct tourism fact-finding surveys, analyses, and effect verification while reflecting them in the operation methods.

4. References



- ① Ishibutai Burial Mound
- ② Terraced rice field
- ③ Image of Asuka Marugoto Museum
- ④ Graph of changes in the numbers of tourists and hotel guests (Source: Asuka Village)